



February 27th, 2020:

Residents and Neighbors,

Information on the Town Meeting Day ballot items can be found in several places this year. In addition to the City website, City Manager Steve Mackenzie created a video that is available through CVTV public access television and we have been visiting with Barre Housing Authority locations, Highgate, and social clubs to answer any questions the public may have. You can currently vote on the ballot items at City Hall and from 7am to 7pm at the Barre Auditorium on Tuesday, March 3rd.

Barre Rotarian Caroline Earle requested a food shelf drop-off within City Hall. There is a need for food and toiletry items for students at Spaulding High School, which the bins will be placed and collected by Barre Rotary Club to bring back to the school office for students to utilize. An additional collection is being discussed to be placed in the polling area during Town Meeting Day in the Barre Auditorium.

City Manager Steve Mackenzie discussed the process by which the City is going back out to bid for the Municipal Pool Project. The original bid has been revised to allow for scope modifications, clearly define alternatives and remove some of the work that can be performed by the City. The bids were released in mid-February to allow for a bidders' conference for contractors and to receive bids back by mid-March.

After hearing from Landlords at the first public hearing, the second public hearing provided a different prospective. Toni Grout from Capstone Community Action spoke to the proposed Charter changes and the impact on housing programs and that the organization provides mediation for tenants and landlords. The Charter change language, as well as others for removing the position of Grand Juror and changing the dollar amount for business contracts are on the ballot for voter approval.

Councilor Morey presented the latest draft of the Taxi and Licensing Ordinance. With changes in services being provided by organizations like Lyft and Uber, the intent is to address the oversight and fee collection via the newer business models. Councilor Morey will be coordinating revisions to bring back to Council in mid-April for possible first reading.

Council continued to receive presentations from organizations in the City and our neighbors:

- Scott McLaughlin presented statistics for 2019 at the Vermont Granite Museum and gave notice of Winterfest and the annual opening in March.
- The Cow Pasture Committee spoke to trail work completed by VYCC staff to fix fences and remove invasive species. Local students have also added bird houses and planted milkweed to improve the experience in this conservation area of the City. They will continue work, including support of "paper streets", to access the property.
- The A.D.A. Committee provided feedback on needed sidewalk and signal repairs, which will be discussed further with the City Manager and DPW Director.

- School Board members Paul Malone and Sonya Spaulding presented the FY21 BUUSD Budget along with Superintendent John Pandolfo. The school district will continue a public outreach effort to explain the effects of wage and insurance increases that have affected the overall increase.
- City Clerk Carol Dawes provided the required annual TIF report to Council. Changes have been made as requested by the VT Economic Progress Council and the Certificate of Completion was approved.
- Quarterly Updates were provided by the Aldrich Library, Barre Area Development and Barre Partnership. An overview of events that have recently occurred and will be occurring early in 2020 was provided.
- Jeremy Hansen gave an update on the work performed by CV Fiber. The group is currently gathering funding to support fiber connectivity throughout Washington County and has received some grant funding already. Although Barre City is not first on the list for the future rollout, services could be provided to those that wish to telecommute from the area or find information online about the City of Barre.
- The Barre City Energy Committee provided their quarterly update, which included information on an upcoming bulb swap at Nelson's Hardware. The energy consumption in the City of Barre is able to be monitored and efforts are underway to help use energy resources more efficiently in the City.
- In response to inquiries were made on an improperly notated crime report released about the City of Barre, Chief Tim Bombardier provided an update on the Public Safety Calls for Service. The crime rate statistics were compared for 2018 to 2019, which showed an overall increase in crime of about 1%, while violent crime had dropped over 20% in the same time period.

City Council approved several items including the following:

- Approval of Certificate of Completion for TIF Bond
- Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreement with AFSCME (DPW) Bargaining Unit
- Approval of 2020 Coin Drop Requests
- Authorize Civic Center Wi-Fi Upgrade Quote from Ormsby's Computer Store
- Authorized placement of Web Links to Volunteer Organizations to the City Website
- Approve Managers Employment Contract Renewal
- Authorization to Submit FY21-23 COPS Grant Application
- Award of WWTF Digester Boiler Replacement Contract

And lastly, there are several new and returning initiatives being discussed:

- The first Council meeting in March will be Monday, March 2nd, due to Town Meeting Day being on Tuesday March 3rd. Please remember to come out and vote.
- Appointments to City Boards, Commissions, and Committees will start again on March 10th. If you would like to serve, please send a letter of interest to the City Manager.
- The next meeting to discuss the Working Communities Challenge Grant is March 12th.
- Coffee with the Mayor at Espresso Bueno on Saturday, March 14th from 8:00 – 10:00 AM.
- SAVE THE DATE - VCRD Community Visit Day will be April 7th. More information to come!

Lucas J. Herring
Mayor, City of Barre